UNDP

update

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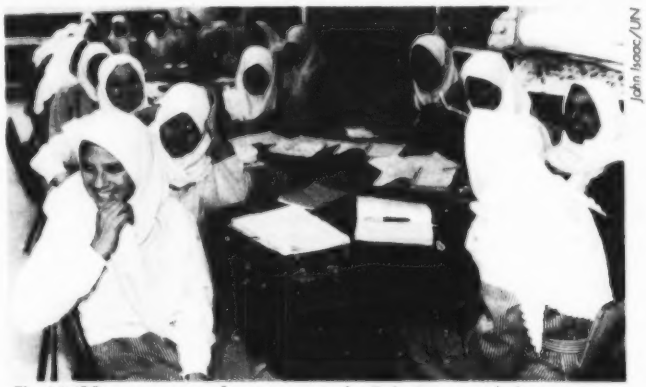
UNDP Administrator joins world leaders at international donor conference for aid to Palestinians

On behalf of the UN Secretary-General, UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth participated in a Conference to Support Middle East Peace, held in Washington, D.C. on 1 October at the US State Department. Participants included delegates from 43 countries who promised about $2 billion in aid over the next five years for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was sponsored by the United States and Russia.

Recognizing that peace is stronger when bolstered by prosperity, the countries promised $600 million in aid for this year alone. They agreed that the economies of the occupied territories were in deplorable shape and needed an immediate burst of aid to reduce tensions after the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"In acting quickly and comprehensively, as we are all anxious to do, it is necessary to be reminded regularly that it is essential to harmonize any and all efforts with the plans, priorities and demonstrated needs of the Palestinians themselves, and to strengthen their capacities to guide the development process," said Mr. Speth in his address to the high-level donor conference.

The gathering had several purposes: to formalize and expand upon the pledges of assistance already made; to work out a structure for coordinating international assistance and promoting economic development for the Palestinian people; and to identify the most pressing needs in order to begin marshalling the material resources to implement the Palestinian-Israeli agreement.



John Isaac/UN

The UNDP programme of assistance to the Palestinians includes support for education.

"For nearly 45 years the United Nations, through UNRWA and subsequently UNDP, UNICEF and other UN agencies, has been assisting Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as carrying out activities in other countries in the Middle East," said Mr. Speth. "In 1993, UN programmes are providing services and implementing special projects amounting to nearly $250 million, a figure currently accounting for one-third of all public expenditure in the West Bank and about one-half in the Gaza Strip," he added.

Mr. Speth mentioned the newly-established UN Task Force created by the UN Secretary-General to support the Israeli-Palestinian accord by focusing on the economic and social development of the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

The three principal organizations already heavily engaged in operational activities in the occupied territories — UNDP, UNICEF and UNRWA — have produced through this Task Force a first-year programme. It is designed "to have a rapid effect on job creation, on improving the quality of life for Palestinians, and on strengthening their capacity to manage their own affairs," said Mr. Speth.

Participants resolved to initiate an extensive programme of technical assistance to build institutions and to train personnel. The World Bank will establish and manage a trust fund to finance this kind of technical assistance, training, and feasibility studies over the next 12-18 months. Moreover, UN agencies including UNDP, along with other multilateral and bilateral programmes and agencies, will provide both technical and financial assistance to support this institution-building effort.

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update

G Accasino

Albania is one of the countries affected economically by the sanctions imposed against Serbia.

Tallying up losses from sanctions against Serbia

The UN Security Council sanctions that were imposed against Serbia, as a result of Serbia's actions in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, have had a serious economic impact on neighbouring countries, particularly those in the process of transition. While the Governments of Albania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia fully support the sanctions, they are anxious to determine the net economic and political effect on their countries.

They have therefore asked for UNDP's assistance in providing a consultant to assess the damage to each country's economy, and provide an independent report as a basis for possible future compensation claims. Many of these countries believe their claims for compensation will be more likely to succeed if the process for determining direct losses is established and carefully evaluated by an independent consultant who can ensure credibility.

The sanctions have resulted in a reduction in river transport on the Danube, a slowdown in tourism, and increased transport costs of goods to and from Bulgaria and other nearby countries.

The consultant will review and analyze the data provided by relevant government ministries in each country to realistically assess the impact on the individual economies and workforces, and the effects on the tourism and transport sectors.

Logistical support for humanitarian aid to Angola

In the aftermath of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Angola armed conflict has resumed, leaving an estimated two million people destitute. The fighting has forced the government to suspend its economic stabilization programme and its current development plan.

Given the urgency of Angola's political and economic situation , a UN inter-agency mission was fielded to Luanda, the capital, to prepare a humanitarian appeal for the country. The appeal document outlined a UNDP programme of assistance to returnees and internally-displaced populations in Angola.

As a result, UNDP will offer an assistance programme in two key fields. First, it will provide logistical support to humanitarian relief operations. Second, it will help build national capabilities for managing a smooth transition from emergency relief to national reconstruction and long-term development.

Specifically, UNDP will provide support for the country's Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit to strengthen the office's ability to manage international humanitarian aid. An international adviser will be recruited to assist the Ministry of Social Affairs in directing all logistics related to this aid. In addition, local radio operators for Luanda and the provinces will be hired to ensure that effective radio systems are in place to support communications for distribution of emergency relief.

New directions for development assistance

More than 300 people recently gathered in Bonn, Germany in the first of a series of regional conferences aimed at garnering widespread support for a new political framework for North-South relations, based on the concept of human security. "The cold war may be over but the threats are not," said Roberto Savio, Director-General of Inter Press Service, which, along with UNDP, provided technical support for the meeting. Outmoded notions of security against military threats are being superseded by new threats, not against nation-states but against people — including hunger, ill health, lack of opportunity and a diminishing natural resource base, said Mr. Savio in an opening address.

The conference, "Building Global Human Security," was sponsored by the Society for International Development and hosted by the German Bundestag. Among the participants were members of parliament from 18 countries, including all OECD-member European nations. Ten of these countries had organized individual "Days of Reflection" prior to the Bonn event, to focus attention on the status and future direction of development assistance. "Europe has two options," said one German parliamentarian, commenting on trends toward protectionism and diminishing aid for the poorest countries. "Either we can build a fortress around ourselves to protect our wealth or we can seize the opportunities before us." In a conference background paper prepared by Mr. Savio and Inge Kaul, director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office, a ten-point agenda was drawn up for restructuring Official Development Assistance. It includes a re-focusing of aid on priority human concerns and new global compacts in areas such a debt, trade and the environment, which are in the mutual interest of all countries. Among the recommendations voiced by parliamentarians themselves was the idea of democratically elected representatives to the UN a "people's body" that would exist side-by-side or in an advisory capacity to the General Assembly.

Change is on the way for Africa 2000

A meeting planned for 14-15 October in Dakar, Senegal could result in management and organizational changes in the Africa 2000 Network, which provides financial and technical support to more than 400

The Africa 2000 Network supports fish farming among its 400 projects.

projects in 15 African countries. Through grants of less than $50,000 to community groups, the Network helps countries preserve the environment and promote development. Issues under discussion at the meeting will include shifting the overall coordination of the Network from New York to an African city. Other options under consideration are the creation of an African Foundation for Sustainable Development, and the transformation of the current Advisory Group into a Board of Directors for the Network.

Total contributions to the Trust Fund for the Network, provided by the Governments of Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, and Norway reached $17.4 million this year. The Network's basic tenet is that projects must be designed, implemented and monitored by the people they are intended to help.

Its initial focus on forestry projects has given way to a broader selection of projects geared toward food production and creating new income sources for local communities. Included now are projects in such areas as soil erosion control, fish farming, livestock rearing, dairy farming, beekeeping, accounting management, and marshland reclamation. All groups that receive funds from the Network contribute to the project itself, most commonly by providing labour and locally available materials.

Practical education for the remote communities in Lao

UNDP and the Government of Lao recently launched a $750,000 project to improve educational opportunities for ethnic minorities. More than half of the people in these remote, ethnic minority communities are illiterate. The four-year project, which will operate in Oudomsay and Sekong provinces, will develop non-formal methods of education, which have more relevance than conventional teaching methods to the lives of the disadvantaged in remote areas.

The scope of the project reaches far beyond merely increasing literacy levels. Practical skills will be taught to enable these communities to improve their economic situations and health care systems. Community education centres will be set up in each village and supplied with learning materials appropriate to local needs and conditions.

All of the project activities will be decided and implemented by the people concerned. In fact, the government will directly execute the project in line with UNDP's aim to promote greater national self-reliance and responsibility for the development assistance a country receives.

Planning for a Caribbean clean-up

Uncontrolled urbanization, inappropriate land use, and lack of environmental management strategies have severely polluted the Caribbean coastal zones. Specifically, tourism, fisheries and industries which extract natural resources from the ground have taken a toll on the coastal and marine environment of the Caribbean. Further expansion of these activities, however, figures prominently in the economic growth of the region. It is essential, therefore, that any development plan which fosters the region's economic potential also protect biodiversity and human health.

UNDP will help devise a programme to rehabilitate and manage the contaminated bays and coastal areas in the Caribbean region. The long-term aim of this Global Environment Facility (GEF) programme will be to ensure sustainable use of the area's important marine ecosystems. The GEF is a trust fund managed by UNDP, the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme to assist developing countries in protecting the global environment.

Four pilot areas have been selected for study: Cartagena Bay in Colombia, Puerto Limon in Costa Rica, Havana Bay in Cuba, and Kingston Harbour in Jamaica. In each case, a detailed evaluation will be made of the environmental conditions, including pollution control programmes. A survey will be conducted of the existing laws and regulatory systems for mitigating pollution risks. Non-governmental agencies and other interest groups involved in managing the environmental resources in each country will be identified. Finally, a study will be carried out to determine ways of strengthening technical cooperation among environmental institutions in the region.

These pilot studies will contribute to the protection and development of the marine resources in the Caribbean by advancing the development of regionally-based expertise, capable of taking action to reduce and control marine pollution.

The clean-up of Havana Bay is an important environmental concern in Cuba.

C. Hart / UNDP

Approved projects

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

Burundi — Development of Karuzi and Cankuzo Secondary Centres — By the year 2000, the urban population of Burundi will represent 17.6 per cent of the total population. Most of the rural population unable to find employment will not be accommodated by the urban centres presently in existence. With UNDP assistance, the government aims to transform the Karuzi and Cankuzo secondary centres into urbanised regional development centres which will absorb rural migrants and provide support services to rural populations.

Roads and electrical systems will be built, along with buildings to house economic and administrative activities. Credit will be provided for the construction of houses and the procurement of equipment.

UNCDF Contribution: $3,462,015. Government cost-sharing: $306,090. UNCDF will finance the extension of the public lighting network in Cankuzo, the construction of roads, buildings and demonstration houses and provide equipment for road maintenance. It will also fund a local credit network. The government will finance office equipment and the national project team. Executed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Works and Urban Development. (BDI/87/C06)

Mauritania — Project Management Unit — Twelve years ago, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) financed the construction of 11 earth dams. These dams allowed farmers to grow crops and diversify their production from livestock. Several evaluations and surveys indicated that in order for the farmers to improve their standard of living, other complementary investments were required.

This regional investment programme is comprised of four interrelated capital investment projects. The first one is geared toward establishing an investment fund to finance community business enterprises. The second project will help stabilize 600 hectares of sand dunes, protect 2,700 hectares of agricultural property, and reforest 700 hectares of land. As part of the third project, more than 50 wells will be equipped with hand pumps, 20 schools will be constructed and a health care dispensary will be built. A technical unit within the Kiffa municipality will be established to execute the investment programme.

UNDP contribution: $2.5 million. UNCDF contribution: $11 million. The UNDP contribution will finance the costs of a project manager, a rural engineer, two UNVs, a national director, a national agronomist and other support staff. UNCDF will provide the required capital investment to implement activities such as sand dune stabilization, improvement of agricultural and livestock techniques, construction of wells and schools. It will also finance the establishment of a local investment fund. Executed by the Office of Project Services of UNDP and implemented by the Ministry of Planning. (MAU/92/C01/MAU/92/C02/MAU/92/C03/MAU/92/C04)

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